

MILPERSMAN 5760-010

NAVY SPOUSE ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

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References	(a) OPNAVINST 1750.1E
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1. Background

a. The sacrifices required of Navy families are substantial. In order to maintain readiness, the Navy must have high standards and retain well-trained people. In order to retain experienced and productive servicemembers, the family life associated with the service must be supported and enhanced as much as possible.

b. Navy spouses have made unselfish contributions to the spirit and well-being of their Sailors. They promote the general welfare of all persons within the Navy community. Many times they subordinate personal and professional plans to the greater benefit of our nation's defense. All feasible support will be rendered to assist in the establishment and maintenance of strong and effective Spouse Clubs and support groups, and other organizations and activities dedicated to the enhancement of morale and improvement in the quality of life (QOL) for Navy members and their families. The Navy Family Ombudsman Program, Family Support Groups, Spouse Clubs, and other organizations work together to meet the needs of Navy families.

2. Navy Family Ombudsman Program

a. In 1970, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral E. Zumwalt recognized the issues and concerns that are unique to Navy families. In response to those issues, he established the Navy Family Ombudsman Program. The Navy Family Ombudsman Program, staffed entirely by volunteers, is governed by reference (a).

b. The ombudsman is a vital resource to assist the command in discharging the commanding officer's (CO's) responsibilities for the morale and welfare of the families of the command.

c. The Command Family Ombudsman Program belongs to the command and is shaped to a great extent by the CO's perceptions of the needs of the command. The ombudsman is appointed by and works under the guidance of the CO, who determines the priorities of the program, the roles and relationships of those involved in it, and the type and level of support it will receive. The effectiveness of the Command Ombudsman Program in serving the needs of the command and its family is greatly influenced by these decisions.

d. The ombudsman is the link between the command and Navy families. This is especially true in deploying commands where the ombudsman is the primary point of contact between the families at home and the command during deployment.

3. Family Support Groups

a. Family Support Groups are vital in meeting the needs of the command families. Support groups range from informal to more formal organizations of spouses within the command. All command support groups, informal or formal, **must** be endorsed by the CO.

b. These groups can meet social needs for camaraderie, companionship, up-to-date information, and serve as a forum to relieve loneliness and stress during unit separations within an undemanding setting. Support groups are usually more active when the command deploys. Once the unit returns, the support group may diminish the number of get-togethers or activities.

4. Spouse Clubs

a. A Spouse Club is similar to a support group but functions under more structured guidelines.

b. A formal club must have the CO's approval for formation, membership requirements, election of officers, and a definite structure as specified in a constitution and bylaws. The constitution, bylaws, and membership requirements should have the CO's approval after scrutiny by the command legal officer.

5. Naval Services FamilyLine (NSFL)

a. The NSFL is an all-volunteer, non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to improving the QOL for every sea service family. Established in 1965 by and for Navy spouses,

the NSFL has now expanded to include Marine Corps and Coast Guard families.

b. NSFL volunteers provide assistance, information, and referral in all matters pertaining to the military or its lifestyle. NSFL developed the Navy-wide Ombudsman Support Network and the ***Ombudsman Journal***. Its Chairman serves as the Chief of Naval Operations' Navy-wide Family Ombudsman-at-Large. NSFL volunteers research, compile, write, and edit all NSFL publications; coordinate educational seminars; and maintain a supplemental ***Lifeline*** mailing list to ensure that all sea service families in isolated locations can receive the newspaper. NSFL has established field representatives at bases around the world to serve as a local point of contact.

c. The policies and programs of NSFL are guided by a board of advisors which includes spouses of both senior officers and enlisted personnel, active duty personnel, and representatives of other service oriented organizations. Every Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard spouse, family member, or active duty and reserve servicemember is automatically a member of the NSFL with no membership fee or registration requirement.

d. The NFSL writes, publishes, and provides free of charge, a variety of informational literature on topics from social customs and traditions to planning and managing financial and personal affairs.

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Home Page: www.lifelines.navy.mil/Familyline

6. Navy Wives Club of America

a. The Navy Wives Club of America was chartered in 1936 with a Federal charter being granted in 1984. Chapters worldwide are open to spouses of enlisted personnel serving in the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the active reserve units of these services; spouses of enlisted personnel who have been honorably discharged, retired, or have been transferred to

the Fleet Reserve on completion of duty; and widows/widowers of enlisted personnel in these services.

b. The Navy Wives Club of America Scholarship Foundation awards 41 scholarships annually to children of enlisted personnel of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

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Home Page: www.navywivesclubsofamerica.org